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# Current Events

May 2022

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The download for Current Affairs for Recruitment Test (RTs) exams of UPSC, including ALC, LEO, APFC, EPFO EO/AO, Admin Officer, Store Officer, Deputy Director, and Investigator Grade-I is available.

The Current Events are tailored to the latest RTs trends and requirements of UPSC. To optimize exam performance, focus on the following key points:

- Cover current events from the past 18 months only, up to the date of the exam. For periodic events, such as the Budget, Economic Survey, Nobel Prize, or Tournaments, refer to only the latest ones. For instance, for an April 2023 exam, study the 2023 budget, not the 2022 budget.
- The UPSC RT exam is factual, so don't delve into details or implications.
- The Return on Investment (ROI) for studying current affairs is generally low. Therefore, devote an appropriate amount of time to them while prioritizing other topics that have a higher ROI. For instance, studying 100 pages of current affairs may result in solving only 5 questions, while studying 100 pages of polity could yield 14-15 questions.
- A few questions will always be unsolvable, no matter how much you've studied. Don't get discouraged by them, as they won't affect your selection.
- Based on experience, you can expect to answer approximately 60-70% of question in exam, from these concise current affairs booklets.
- Current affairs for UPSC RT exams are purely factual, so self-study is better than coaching classes. In fact, coaching classes are counterproductive, as a teacher may only cover 10 events in 60 minutes, while you can cover 35-40 events in the same time frame.

Finally, note that these files are specifically prepared for RT exams of UPSC and should not be used for Civil Services Preliminary exam (GS Paper 1).

If you want to report any correction/error/feedback, you are welcome at [contact@humanperitus.com](mailto:contact@humanperitus.com). We will check and respond within 1 working day.

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## May 2022

### 1. Sports and Games

#### **India won Thomas Cup first-time ever**

India's Men's Badminton team has won the Thomas Cup title for the first time ever by defeating Indonesia. The tournament was held in Bangkok (Thailand). The Indian men's team consisted of Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy. Note that, Kidambi Srikanth remained unbeaten throughout the tournament.

*Thomas Cup* is a 16-nation team event (teams representing member countries of the Badminton World Federation). The championships have been conducted every 2 years since 1982. It was started by England Player Sir George Alan Thomas.

#### **P V Sindhu won Bronze in Asia Badminton Championships**

India's P.V. Sindhu has won her second Asian bronze medal after losing to defending champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the semi-final in Asia Badminton Championships, Manila. She had won her first bronze in the Asia Badminton Championships 2014 Gimcheon, South Korea.

#### **World Snooker Championship 2022**

Ronnie O'Sullivan (England) has won the 2022 World Snooker Championship by defeating Judd Trump (England). This championship was held at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England. The tournament was organised by the World Snooker Tour and sponsored by sports betting company Betfred.

#### **Discus Thrower Kamalpreet Kaur suspended by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU)**

Olympian discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur has been provisionally suspended by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for testing positive for a banned substance. She was suspended for the use of the prohibited substance stanozolol in her sample, a breach of the World Athletics anti-doping rules. She had made it to the Tokyo Olympics final, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> with a throw of 63.7 m.

#### **Asian Games 2022 to be held in China, Postponed**

The Asian Games 2022, to be held in Hangzhou, China in September 2022, has been postponed to 2023 due to rising COVID-19 cases in the country. This was announced by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

The OCA also announced that the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Asian Youth Games, scheduled to be held in Shantou in December, have been cancelled.

The World University Games 2021, to be held from June 26 to July 27 in Chengdu this year, have also been pushed to 2023.

#### **Chessable Sunway Formentera Open 2022 chess tournament won by Indian Player – D. Gukesh**

Indian Grandmaster D. Gukesh has emerged as champion in the first Chessable Sunway Formentera Open 2022 chess tournament held in Punta Prima, Spain. It was a hat-trick of titles for him after he had previously won the La Roda tournament and the Menorca Open.

#### **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup**

Indian pistol pairs Esha Singh and Saurabh Chaudhary has won the mixed team pistol gold at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup held in Suhl, Germany.

### **Shikhar Dhawan become first player to hit 700 fours in IPL**

Shikhar Dhawan has become the first player to hit 700 fours in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL). He reached this feat during the last league stage match of IPL 2022, between Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad, at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai.

Shikhar is followed by David Warner and Virat Kohli.

### **French Open Tennis Grand Slam 2022**

The 2022 French Open was a Grand Slam tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts. It was held at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France.

#### *Winners List*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner-up</b>
Men's Singles	Rafael Nadal (Spain)	Casper Ruud (Norwegian)
Women's Singles	Iga Świątek (Poland)	Coco Gauff (US)
Men's Doubles	Marcelo Arévalo (El Salvador), Jean-Julien Rojer (Netherlands)	Ivan Dodig (Croatian), Austin Krajicek (US)
Women's Doubles	Caroline Garcia (French), Kristina Mladenovic (French)	Jessica Pegula (US), Coco Gauff (US)
Mixed Doubles	Ena Shibahara (Japan), Wesley Koolhof (Netherlands)	Joran Vliegen (Belgium), Ulrikke Eikeri (Norway)

### **24<sup>th</sup> Deaflympics at Caxias do Sul, Brazil – Air Rifle Competition**

Shooter Dhanush Srikanth has won gold and Shourya Saini has won the bronze in the men's 10m Air Rifle competition in the 24<sup>th</sup> Deaflympics at Caxias do Sul, Brazil.

Also, for the very first time, the Indian Deaflympics team finished amongst the top 10 nations in the event with 16 medals, a huge jump from just five in 2017.

## 2. Science and Technology

### **What are Anabolic steroids?**

Anabolic steroids were in the news.

*Anabolic steroids* are essentially lab-made versions of the male hormone testosterone and have a similar effect of increasing muscle mass as the natural hormone does. It also increases male characteristics in a person, such as facial hair and a deeper voice. More than being a drug prescribed by doctors, anabolic steroids are usually used by bodybuilders.

### **Total Lunar Eclipse, Red Moon, Supermoon**

On 16 May 2022, a total lunar eclipse or *Chandra Grahan* was occurred over South America, most of North America and parts of Europe and Africa. During this, the first Blood Moon of 2022 was also become more clearly visible.

*Total lunar eclipse:* During a total lunar eclipse, the Moon usually turns a deep, dark red because it is illuminated by light that has passed through the Earth's atmosphere and has been bent back towards the Moon by refraction. A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon and the Sun are on exact opposite sides of Earth.

Blues and purples have shorter wavelengths and scatter in our atmosphere, giving the sky its inky colour, but reds and oranges have the highest wavelengths and pass through our atmosphere before it is bent or refracted around Earth, hitting the surface of the Moon and making it red.

*Supermoon:* A supermoon occurs when the Moon's orbit is closest to the Earth at the same time that the Moon is full.

*Perigee and Apogee:* As the Moon orbits the Earth, there is a point of time when the distance between the 2 is the least (called the *perigee* when the average distance is about 360,000 km from the Earth) and a point of time when the distance is the most (called the *apogee* when the distance is about 405,000 km from the Earth).

### **ISRO successfully completed static test of solid rocket booster for Gaganyaan Mission**

The static test of the human-rated solid rocket booster (HS200) for the Gaganyaan programme was completed by the Indian Space Research Organization. The booster engine is part of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk-III (GSLV Mk III) rocket that will carry Indian astronauts to space. It is the world's second largest operational booster using solid propellants.

*Gaganyaan:* Formal announcement of the Gaganyaan programme was made by Prime Minister of India during his Independence Day address on August 15, 2018. The mission is expected to be launched in 2023.

Under the Gaganyaan schedule, 3 flights will be sent into orbit. There will be 2 unmanned flights and 1 human spaceflight. The Orbital Module will have 3 Indian astronauts, including a woman. It will circle Earth at a Low-Earth-Orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days. With this launch, India will become the 4<sup>th</sup> nation in the world to launch a Human Spaceflight Mission after the USA, Russia and China.

4 Indian astronaut candidates have already undergone generic space flight training in Russia as part of the Gaganyaan programme.

### **Government opened India's first 5G testbed**

Prime Minister of India has opened India's first 5G testbed, which will allow Startups and industrial companies

to test their products locally, eliminating reliance on international facilities. He added during the occasion that India's own 5G standard, 5Gi, was a source of great pride for the country and that it will play a significant role in delivering 5G technology to the country's villages. The 5G testbed has been developed as a multi-institute collaborative project by eight institutes led by IIT Madras.

*5Gi*: The 5G Radio Interface Technology, called 5Gi is a locally designed telecommunication network that will be an alternative to the global 5G standards. 5Gi offers more range at a lower frequency, which is the opposite of 5G. The latter works between the 700 MHz to 52,000 MHz bands and sacrifices on range.

### **Government launches 2 indigenously built warships – Surat and Udaygiri**

Minister of Defence has launched 2 indigenously built warships 'Surat' and 'Udaygiri' at the Mazagon Docks in Mumbai. This is the first time that 2 indigenously built warships have been launched concurrently.

The 'Surat' and 'Udaygiri' warships have been designed in-house by the Directorate of Naval Design (DND) and built at the Mumbai-based MDL, a premier ship and submarine building defence public sector undertaking.

'Surat' is the fourth ship of Project 15B Destroyers, which heralds a significant makeover of the P15A (Kolkata Class) destroyers and is named after the commercial capital of Gujarat and also the second largest commercial hub of western India after Mumbai. The Project 15B class of ships is the Navy's next generation stealth guided missile destroyers being built at the MDL.

'Udaygiri', named after a mountain range in Andhra Pradesh, is the third ship of Project 17A Frigates. P17A Frigates are warships that are a follow-on class of the P17 (Shivalik Class) Frigates with improved stealth features, advanced weapons, sensors and platform management systems.

### **Government decided to use RFID Tags to track Amarnath pilgrims**

Considering the high-level security review of the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra, the government has decided to track all pilgrims using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

Radio Frequency Identification is a wireless tracking system that consists of tags and readers. Radio waves are used to communicate information/identity of objects or people. The tags can carry encrypted information, serial numbers and short descriptions.

### **Army Training Command signed MoU with Rashtriya Raksha University for WARDEC Project**

The Army Training Command has signed a MoU with Gandhinagar-based Rashtriya Raksha University to develop a 'Wargame Research and Development Centre' in New Delhi. The project, which has been given a prototype name 'WARDEC', will be a first-of-its-kind simulation-based training centre in India that will use artificial intelligence (AI) to design virtual reality wargames.

### **DBT issued guidelines easing norms for research into GM Crops; GEAC**

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has issued guidelines easing norms for research into Genetically Modified (GM) crops and circumventing challenges of using foreign genes to change crops profile. These guidelines are applicable to all public/private organisations involved in research, development and handling of Gene Edited Plants.

According to it, the researchers who use gene-editing technology to modify the genome of the plant are exempt from seeking approvals from the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC). The final call however is taken by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) as well as States where such



plants could be cultivated. All requirements that researchers must adhere to develop transgenic seeds will apply to gene-edited seeds except clauses that require permission from the GEAC.

The GM plants involve transgenic technology or introducing a gene from a different species into a plant, for instance BT-cotton, where a gene from soil bacterium is used to protect a plant from pest attack.

*Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC):* The GEAC functions under the MoEF&CC. It is a statutory body notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. As per Rules, 1989, it is responsible for appraisal of activities involving large scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production from the environmental angle.

### **India's ASTROSAT witness birth of black hole 500<sup>th</sup> time**

India's ASTROSAT space telescope has witnessed the birth of a black hole in space for the 500<sup>th</sup> time.

*AstroSat* is India's first multi-wavelength space telescope, which has 5 telescopes seeing through different wavelengths simultaneously — visible, near UV, far UV, soft X-ray and hard X-ray. Onboard the AstroSat is a 38-cm wide UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (UVIT), which is capable of imaging in far and near-ultraviolet bands over a wide field of view.

AstroSat was launched on in September 2015 by ISRO into a near-Earth equatorial orbit. It is a multi-institute collaborative project, involving IUCAA, ISRO, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai), Indian Institute of Astrophysics (Bengaluru), and Physical Research Laboratory (Ahmedabad), among others. It has been studying Gamma-Ray Bursts (GRB).

### **Hacking Group Lapsus\$**

Authentication platform Okta has confirmed that hackers from the cyber-crime group Lapsus\$ had tried intruding into its system.

Lapsus\$ is a cyber-crime group said to be based in South America. The group is relatively new but has successfully breached major firms like Microsoft. It has also publicly taunted their victims, leaking their source code and internal documents. Their hacking tactics include phone-based social engineering, SIM-swapping to facilitate account takeover, accessing personal email accounts of employees at target organisations etc.

### **PARAM ANANTA commissioned at IIT Gandhinagar**

PARAM ANANTA was commissioned at IIT Gandhinagar under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM). It has been developed jointly by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. It has 838 TeraFlops supercomputing capability.

Also, PARAM PORUL, a state-of-the-art Supercomputer was inaugurated at NIT Tiruchirappalli. It has been established under Phase 2 of the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

Also note that, India has developed an indigenous server (Rudra), which can meet the High-Performance Computing (HPC) requirements of all governments and PSUs. This is the first time that a server system was made in India, along with the full software stack developed by C-DAC.

### **Government inaugurated country's first liquid nano urea plant at Kalol, Gujarat**

Government of India has inaugurated the country's first liquid nano urea plant at Kalol, Gujarat. It will be produced by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Limited.

Urea is a chemical nitrogen fertilizer, white in colour, which artificially provides nitrogen, a major nutrient required by plants. Liquid nano urea is essentially urea in the form of a nanoparticle.

### **IN-SPACE Headquarters was inaugurated at Bopal, Ahmedabad**

Headquarters of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE) was inaugurated at Bopal, Ahmedabad. The establishment of IN-SPACE was announced in June 2020. It is an autonomous and single window nodal agency in the Department of Space. It was established for the promotion, encouragement and regulation of space activities of both government and private entities. It also facilitates the usage of ISRO facilities by private entities.

### **What is Web 5.0?**

Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has announced his vision for a new decentralized web platform that is being called Web 5.0. The aim is to return “ownership of data and identity to individuals”.

#### *Notable Points*

- Web 1.0 is the “read-only Web,” Web 2.0 is the “participative social Web,” and Web 3.0 is the “read, write, execute Web.”
- Web 1.0. Web 1.0 was all about reading and getting information.
- Web 2.0 was all about reading, writing, and creating. So, users joined social platforms, and these platforms got big because of this created content.
- Web 3.0 is all about reading, writing and owning. So, builders and creators can now own a piece of their own community, through NFTs, tokens etc.

#### *Web 5.0*

It is being developed by Dorsey’s Bitcoin business unit, The Block Head (TBH). Simply put, Web 5.0 is Web 2.0 plus Web 3.0 that will allow users to ‘own their identity’ on the Internet and ‘control their data’. Both Web 3.0 and Web 5.0 envision an Internet without threat of censorship – from governments or big tech, and without fear of significant outages.

### **Google’s new Service – Dynamic world**

Dynamic world is a new service from Google to track how the planet changes in response to various natural and human activities like floods, fires, deforestation, etc.

### 3. Environment

#### **CAG Report pointed out illegal construction near 2 Ramsar sites – East Kolkata Wetlands and the Sunderbans**

An audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General has pointed out illegal construction and violations of environmental norms in 2 Ramsar sites in West Bengal – East Kolkata Wetlands and the Sunderbans.

Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification disallows construction of residential buildings in the No Development Zone. The EKW, a unique peri-urban ecosystem that lies on the eastern fringes of Kolkata, covers an area of about 12,500 hectares.

*CRZ:* After the passing of the Environment Protection Act in 1986, CRZ Rules were first framed in 1991 and then subsequently fresh rules were issued in 2011 and 2018. In all Rules, the regulation zone has been defined as the area up to 500 m from the high-tide line. Also, while the CRZ Rules are made by the Union Environment Ministry, implementation is to be ensured by State Governments through their Coastal Zone Management Authorities.

#### *Indian Sundarbans*

- Covers 4,200 sq. km and includes the Sunderban Tiger Reserve.
- Home to about 96 royal Bengal tigers (as per the last census in 2020).
- It is a world heritage site and a Ramsar site (a wetland site designated to be of international importance).
- It is also home to a large number of “rare and globally threatened species, such as the critically endangered northern river Terrapin (*Batagur baska*), the endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*), and the vulnerable fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*).”
- 2 of the world’s 4 horseshoe crab species, and 8 of India’s 12 species of kingfisher are also found here.
- Recent studies claim that the Indian Sundarban is home to 90% of the country’s mangrove varieties.

#### **Chhattisgarh Model for countering Stubble burning**

3,895 field fires have been reported in the month of April in Punjab.

*Stubble burning* is a common practice followed by farmers to prepare fields for sowing of wheat in November as there is little time left between the harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat. Stubble burning results in emission of harmful gases such carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide along with particulate matter.

#### *Chhattisgarh Model*

An innovative experiment has been undertaken by the Chhattisgarh Government by setting up Gauthans. A Gauthan is a dedicated 5-acre plot, held in common by each village, where all the unused stubble is collected through parali daan (people’s donations) and is converted into organic fertiliser by mixing with cow dung and few natural enzymes. The scheme also generates employment among rural youth. The government supports the transportation of parali from the farm to the nearest Gauthan.

#### **J&K Government unique initiative for Dal Lake – Athwas**

To combat the increasing pollution and rejuvenate Dal Lake, a unique initiative known as ‘Athwas’ was launched by the Jammu & Kashmir Government.

Athwas is a unique partnership between citizens and authorities for the rejuvenation of Dal Lake. Under the initiative, the de-weeding and dredging will be conducted in collaboration with the citizens. It involves community participation

### *Dal Lake*

- It is named the “Jewel in the crown of Kashmir” or “Srinagar’s Jewel”.
- The lake is also an important source for commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting.
- The lake is located in the Zabarwan mountain valley, in the foothills of the Shankracharya hills, which surround it on 3 sides.
- The lake has 4 main interconnected basins namely, Hazratbal, Bod dal, Gagribal and Nagin.
- The floating gardens here, known as “Raad” in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August.

### **World’s largest wetland is at risk of collapse – Pantanal Wetland**

The world’s largest wetland, known as the Pantanal, in South America is at risk of collapse. This is due to a series of local and seemingly minor decisions that fail to account for their cumulative impact on one of Earth’s most biodiverse ecosystems. It is also the world’s largest flooded grasslands. It is fed through the Paraguay River and tributaries. It is designated a National Heritage by the Brazilian Constitution and a restricted-use region whose use should be ecologically sustainable.

Location: *Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay*

### **15<sup>th</sup> session of CoP 15 of UNCCD held in Cote d’Ivoire**

India has taken part in the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast, Western Africa).

COP 15 is a key moment in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought. It builds on the findings of the second edition of the Global Land Outlook and offer a concrete response to the interconnected challenges of land degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss. The Global Land Outlook (GLO), the UNCCD flagship publication, underscores land system challenges, showcases transformative policies and practices, and points to cost-effective pathways to scale up sustainable land and water management.

*Theme:* The COP15 theme, ‘Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity’, is a call to action to ensure land, the lifeline on this planet, continues to benefit present and future generations.

The Drought in Numbers, 2022 Rport was also released in the Conference.

*UNCCD:* It was established in 1994. It is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. It is the only convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference’s Agenda 21. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

### **Great Indian Bustards**

The Supreme Court of India had directed the governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat to ensure installation of bird-diverters on power lines before 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The move is aimed at protecting the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), the State bird of Rajasthan, and the lesser floricans in the area.



#### *Great Indian Bustards (GIB)*

- Listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in the CMS Convention and in Appendix I of CITES.
- Identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
- Project Great Indian Bustard — state of Rajasthan — identifying and fencing off bustard breeding grounds in existing protected areas as well as provide secure breeding enclosures in areas outside protected areas.
- Protected areas: Desert National Park Sanctuary — Rajasthan, Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary – Andhra Pradesh and Karera Wildlife Sanctuary– Madhya Pradesh.
- IUCN status: critically endangered.

#### **What is Twin Cyclone?**

A pair of tropical cyclones, Asani & Karim (one in the northern hemisphere and one in the southern hemisphere) one on each side of the equator, have been formed. These are cyclones originating in the same longitude and now drifting apart. Cyclone Asani has formed in the Bay of Bengal. Cyclone Karim has created a path in the open seas west of Australia.

#### **Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary notified as India's 52<sup>nd</sup> Tiger Reserve**

The Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary in Rajasthan was notified as India's 52<sup>nd</sup> Tiger Reserve. This is Rajasthan's 4<sup>th</sup> tiger reserve after Ranthambore, Sariska and Mukundra. The newly notified tiger reserve includes the tiger habitat between Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the northeast and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve on the southern side and facilitates dispersal of tigers from Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.

#### **World Forestry Congress held in South Korea**

The Seoul Forest Declaration was an outcome of the discussions held at the XV World Forestry Congress in Seoul, South Korea. This was the second congress held in Asia, with Indonesia hosting the first Congress in Asia in 1978.

Theme for 2022: *"Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests"*

### **WEF released Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2022 Report**

The World Economic Forum has released a report named Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2022, which calls for urgent action by both private and public sectors to ensure a resilient energy transition to address the challenges to environmental sustainability, energy security and energy justice and affordability. It is an annual country benchmarking report of WEF.

The World Economic Forum is a Swiss non-profit foundation established in 1971, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is recognized by the Swiss authorities as the international institution for public-private cooperation.

Founder and Executive Chairman: *Klaus Schwab*

*Some major reports published by WEF:* Energy Transition Index, Global Competitiveness Report, Global IT Report, WEF along with INSEAD, and Cornell University publishes this report, Global Gender Gap Report, Global Risk Report, Global Travel and Tourism Report.

### **Chhattisgarh Government recognizes Community Forest Resource Rights**

The Chhattisgarh Government has become only the second state in the country to recognise Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights of a village inside a national park. The CFR rights of tribals living in Gudiyapadar, a hamlet inside the Kanger Ghati National Park in Bastar district, were recognised, giving the community power to formulate rules for forest use. In 2016, the Odisha Government was the first to recognise Community Forest Resources (CFRs) inside the Simlipal National Park.

*Community Forest Resource Rights:* These rights are recognised under Section 3 of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (commonly referred to as the Forest Rights Act or the FRA). They provide for recognition of the right to “protect, regenerate or conserve or manage” the community forest resource. These rights allow the community to formulate rules for forest use by itself and others and thereby discharge its responsibilities under Section 5 of the FRA.

### **Kolkata becomes first metropolitan to prepare detailed register of biodiversity**

Kolkata has become the first major metropolitan city to prepare a detailed register of biodiversity i.e. PBR. PBR contains comprehensive information on locally available Bio-resources including landscape and demography of a particular area or village.

The Biological Diversity Act 2002 has made it mandatory for every local self-governing institution in rural and urban areas to constitute Biodiversity Management Committees within their area of jurisdiction. Once constituted, BMC must prepare a PBR in consultation with local people.

### **World's first fishing cat census done at Chilika**

World's first fishing cat census was done at Chilika Lake. It was conducted by Chilika Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with The Fishing Cat Project (TFCP).

The fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) is a medium-sized wild cat of South and Southeast Asia, listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Fishing cat populations are threatened by the destruction of wetlands and have declined severely over the last decade. The fishing cat is the state animal of West Bengal.

As per it, the Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, has 176 fishing cats.

### **Environmental Performance Index latest report released**

The latest edition of the Environmental Performance Index was released. The report is prepared by the

researchers of:

1. Yale Centre for Environmental Law & Policy.
2. Centre for International Earth Science Information Network Earth Institute, Columbia University.

*Environmental Performance Index:* The EPI provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world. It ranks 180 countries on 40 performance indicators including climate change, environmental public health, biodiversity etc. The report ranked India at the bottom in a list of 180 countries.

### **CAQM banned usage of coal in entire Delhi-NCR**

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has issued directions to ban the use of coal in industrial, domestic and other miscellaneous applications in the entire Delhi-NCR region from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. This step is taken to bring down greenhouse gas emissions in Delhi NCR. Delhi is among the world's most polluted capital cities.

The Commission was first formed by an ordinance in October 2020. The erstwhile Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, or EPCA had been dissolved to make way for the Commission. The Commission will be a statutory authority. The Commission will supersede bodies such as the central and state pollution control boards of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan. Note that, in 2021, the Parliament approved the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill.

#### *Composition*

- Chairperson: To be chaired by a government official of the rank of Secretary or Chief Secretary.
- The Chairperson will hold the post for 3 years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
- It will have members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the stakeholder States.
- It will have experts from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Civil Society.

### **Government banned Single-Use-Plastic from 1<sup>st</sup> of July**

The Central Government has banned the use of 'single-use-plastic' from July 1 and now defined a list of single-use plastic items that will be banned from this date. As per MoEF&CC, the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of following single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2022.

Single-Use-Plastic refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded. For example, plastics used in packaging of items, bottles (shampoo, detergents, cosmetics), polythene bags, face masks, coffee cups, cling film, trash bags, food packaging etc.

Also note that, as per World Gold Council, India has emerged as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest recycler in the world.

## 4. Schemes and Programmes

### **Government of India Amrit Sarovar Mission**

75 ponds in Ghaziabad set for revival under Central Government's 'Amrit Sarovar' scheme.

*Amrit Sarovar Mission:* It was launched in April 2022. The objective of the Mission Amrit Sarovar is "construction/development" of at least 75 ponds in every district of the country. As part of the initiative, each of the ponds will have a pondage area of minimum 1 acre (0.4 hectares) with water holding capacity of about 10,000 cubic metres. All rural districts have been directed to develop at least 75 ponds, totalling about 50,000 Amrit Sarovars across the country. The scheme also mentions that if the district is unable to create as many new Amrit Sarovars, they may take up rejuvenation of the existing ponds for restoring their ecological and productive utility.

### **RailTel launches PM-WANI based access to its WiFi across 100 Railway Stations**

RailTel has launched Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme-based access to its Public WiFi services across 100 railway stations in 22 States. To access this WiFi network, android users can download the mobile app 'Wi-DOT' available on Google Play Store. This app has been developed in close coordination with C-DOT. This method of accessing Wi-Fi through the 'mobile app' would be in addition to the existing method of accessing WiFi at these stations through the conventional method of selecting Rail Wire Service Set Identifier.

*PM-WANI* is an ambitious program of the Department of Telecom (DoT) to connect all silo Wi-Fi networks for ease of use and proliferate broadband usage for the masses.

### **AIM-PRIME Playbook launches by NITI Aayog**

The AIM-PRIME Playbook was launched by NITI Aayog.

The *AIM PRIME* (Program for Researchers in Innovation, Market Readiness and Entrepreneurship) program was aimed at promoting early-stage science-based, deep technology ideas to market through training and guidance over a period of 12 months using a blended learning curriculum. Other program benefits include the PRIME Playbook, a guide for science-based entrepreneurs and ventures, the PRIME Library, a curated resource shared by the faculty and expert mentors associated with the program, and the PRIME Videos, an open-access video collection of the lectures delivered as part of the PRIME Classroom.

*Implementing Agency:* Atal Innovation Mission has collaborated with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

### **MoHUA launches BHARAT TAP initiative**

Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the BHARAT TAP initiative at the 'Plumbex India' exhibition. This exhibition is aimed at products and services related to the plumbing, water, and sanitation industry.

*BHARAT TAP* is a concept to use low flow tap and fixtures. It will provide low-flow, sanitary-ware at scale, and thereby reduce water consumption at the source considerably. It is estimated to save approximately 40% of water. This will in turn result in water saving and energy saving due to less water and energy will be required for pumping, transporting, and purification.

### **Ministry of Communication launches GatiShakti Sanchar Portal**

The Ministry of Communications has launched the GatiShakti Sanchar portal for Centralised Right of Way (RoW) approvals. It has been launched in line with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan. The portal has been developed keeping in view the vision areas of the National Broadband Mission, which is majorly about providing broadband infrastructure to every citizen. The portal shall act as an enabler to the objective of "Ease of doing



business” for telecommunications infrastructure works.

### **Government plans integration of e-Shram portal with ONORC scheme**

Government of India is in the process of integrating the e-Shram portal of the Ministry of Labour and Employment with the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

*e-Shram Portal* was launched in August 2021 by the Ministry of Labour & Employment. It is a national database to register unorganised workers. The portal came into being after the Supreme Court directed the Government to complete the registration process of unorganised workers. Each registered worker will be issued an identity card, which can be used across the country to avail any benefits announced by the Government.

The *One Nation One Ration Card scheme* is aimed at enabling migrant workers and their family members to buy subsidised ration from any fair price shop anywhere in the country under the National Food Security Act, 2013. ONORC was launched in August 2019. Department for the nation-wide portability of ration cards under National Food Security Act 2013 is the implementing agency. Any citizen, who is declared under Below Poverty Line category is eligible to get the benefit of this scheme across the country.

### **World Bank granted funds for Gujrat’s SRESTHA-G Project**

The World Bank has granted USD 350 million for Gujarat’s – Systems Reform Endeavours for Transformed Health Achievement, or the SRESTHA-G initiative. This project aims on transforming key health delivery systems in Gujarat. It will also focus on the disease surveillance systems’ capacity.

### **Government launches BioRRAP Portal**

In keeping with the spirit of "One Nation, One Portal", Government of India has launched "BioRRAP" portal, a single National Portal for Biotech researchers and Start-ups.

The Portal "BioRRAP" will cater to all those seeking regulatory approval for biological research & development activity in the country and thus offer a huge relief for "Ease of Science as well as Ease of Business.

*BioRRAP: Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal*

### **Ministry of Home Affairs launches CAPF Punarvaas**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has launched ‘CAPF Punarvaas’, through the Welfare & Rehabilitation Board (WARB). This has been launched with an aim to facilitate retired Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and Assam Rifle personnel to secure employment with private security agencies. The portal will help retired personnel seeking re-employment to find an appropriate match by uploading their personal details on the WARB website along with their area of expertise and preferred employment location.

### **Government unveils Agnipath scheme**

The Government has unveiled Agnipath scheme for recruiting soldiers across the 3 services.

Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers (will be called ‘*Agniveers*’) will be recruited annually for a short period. Of the total annual recruits, only 25 % will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under Permanent Commission.

*Eligibility:* Aspirants between the ages of 17.5 years and 23 years will be eligible to apply. The scheme is only applicable to personnel below officer ranks.

#### *Recruitment*

- Twice a year through rallies.

- The recruitment will be done on “all India, all class” recruitment to the services (from any caste, region, class or religious background). Currently, recruitment is based on ‘regiment system’ based on region and caste bases.

*Salary and Benefits*

- Recruits will get starting salary of Rs 30,000, along with additional benefits which will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the four-year service.
- During this period, 30 % of their salary will be set aside under a Seva Nidhi programme, and the government will contribute an equal amount every month, and it will also accrue interest. At the end of the 4-year period, each soldier will get Rs 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount, which will be tax-free.
- For 25% of soldiers, who are re-selected, the initial four-year period will not be considered for retirement benefits.

*Similar schemes in other countries:*

- Voluntary tour of duty: In the USA tours are 6-9 or even 12 months’ deployment depending upon the needs of the military and branch of service.
- Mandatory tour of duty (called *conscription*): Countries that follow the practice of conscription include Israel, Norway, North Korea, and Sweden.

**MoHUA launches NIPUN Scheme** (*different from MoE’s NIPUN Scheme*)

Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a project named National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN) for the promotion of Upskilling of 1 lakh Nirman Workers. It comes under MoHUA’s DAY-NULM (National Urban Livelihood Mission). It will train construction workers to access self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities. Implementation will be done by National Skill Development Corporation (under MSD&E).



## 5. Polity

### **National Flag of India**

Khadi Sanghas activists have written to the Government on the move to allow non-khadi material for the national flag.

As per the Flag Code of India 2002, only khadi or hand-spun cloth was the material for the flag. Use of other material was punishable. But the recent amendment has provided that the National Flag shall be made of hand spun and hand woven or machine made, cotton, polyester, wool, silk khadi bunting.

Present flag is based on the Swaraj flag, a flag of the Indian National Congress designed by Pingali Venkayya. It was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting in Karachi in 1931.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan narrated significance of National flag as the “Ashoka Chakra” is the wheel of the law of dharma. Chakra intends to show that there is LIFE IN MOVEMENT and death in stagnation.”

#### *Constitutional & Statutory Provisions regarding National Flag of India*

- Article 51A(a): To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.
- Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950.
- Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

### **Official languages in Court**

Underlining the need to “encourage the use of local languages in courts” since a large section of the country’s population “finds it difficult to understand the judicial process and rulings of the court,” Prime Minister of India has said that such a move would help the common man relate to the judiciary.

#### *Notable Points*

- Article 348 (1) of the Constitution of India provides that all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High Court shall be in English Language until Parliament by law otherwise provides.
- Under Article 348 (2), the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the Hindi language or any other language used for any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court having its principal seat in that State provided that decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts shall be in English.
- Section 7 of the Official Languages Act, 1963, provides that the use of Hindi or official language of a State in addition to the English language may be authorized, with the consent of the President of India, by the Governor of the State for purpose of judgments etc. made by the High Court for that State.

The provision of optional use of Hindi in proceedings has already been made in the High Courts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

### **Vaccination cannot be made mandatory – Article 21**

The Supreme Court of India has ruled that no one can be forced to get vaccinated because bodily autonomy and integrity are protected under Article 21 (Right to life) of the Indian Constitution.

The Court made it clear that vaccines cannot be made mandatory, and no person can be forced to get vaccinated against his or her wishes. This is because the right to bodily integrity of a person under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to refuse vaccination. But, in the case of “communitarian health”, the government

is entitled to regulate issues. The Courts also had the authority to review whether the government's interventions met the "three-fold" requirements as expounded in the Constitution Bench judgment in S. Puttaswamy case (the judgment which upheld the right of privacy as a constitutional right under Article 21).

*Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India*

In 2017, a 9-judge bench of the SC delivered a unanimous verdict affirming that the Constitution of India guarantees to each individual a Fundamental Right to privacy under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

**What is Split Verdict?**

Delhi High Court has delivered a split verdict in a batch of petitions challenging the exception provided to marital rape in the Indian Penal Code – Section 375.

*Split Verdict*

- Justice Rajiv Shakti: The exception under Section 375 is unconstitutional.
- Justice C Hari Shankar held that the provision is valid.

In case of a split verdict, the case is heard by a larger Bench. This is why judges usually sit in Benches of odd numbers (three, five, seven, etc.) for important cases.

**New Chief Election Commissioner appointed**

Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar would take charge as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

**SC special power under Article 142**

The Supreme Court has invoked its extraordinary powers to do complete justice under Article 142 of the Constitution and ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

*Article 142* provides a unique power to the Supreme Court, to do "complete justice" between the parties, where at times law or statute may not provide a remedy, the Court can extend itself to put a quietus to a dispute in a manner which would befit the facts of the case.

**SC upheld various provisions of NGT**

The Supreme Court has upheld various provisions of the National Green Tribunal Act 2010. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh High Court Advocates Bar Association had challenged certain provisions of the National Green Tribunal Act.

*National Green Tribunal*

- Established on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.
- Established for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
- The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- NGT is mandated to make disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the same.
- With the establishment of the NGT, India became the 3<sup>rd</sup> country in the world to set up a specialised Environmental Tribunal, only after Australia and New Zealand, and the first developing country to do so.

*Composition*

- *Sanctioned strength:* The act allows for up to 40 members (20 expert members and 20 judicial members).
- *Chairman:* Is the administrative head of the tribunal, also serves as a judicial member and is required to be a serving or retired Chief Justice of a High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court of India.

**Revised Flag Code of India come into effect**

Revised Flag Code of India has come into effect. The Union government in December 2021 amended the flag code. According to this, the Indian national flag or Tricolour can now be made of polyester and with the help of machines.

## 6. Governance

### **Ministry of Home Affairs inaugurates NATGRID campus in Bengaluru**

Minister of Home Affairs has inaugurated the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) campus in Bengaluru.

First conceptualized in 2009, NATGRID seeks to become the one-stop destination for security and intelligence agencies to access database related to immigration entry and exit, banking and telephone details of a suspect on a secured platform.

*Access:* It will be a medium for at least 10 Central agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) to access data on a secured platform. The data will be procured by NATGRID from 21 providing organisations such as the telecom, tax records, bank, immigration etc.

### **RPF conducts Operation Satark**

Railway Protection Force has conducted Operation Satark with an objective of taking action against illicit liquor/FICN/illegal tobacco products/unaccounted gold and any other items being transported through railway networks for the purpose of tax evasion and smuggling.

Railway Protection Force is an armed force of the union entrusted with the security of railway property, passenger area and passengers. It is the lead security agency in the field of railway security having a pan India reach.

### **Lokpal got its office at World Trade Centre in South Delhi**

The Lokpal of India will finally move into its new permanent office at the World Trade Centre of South Delhi. In March 2019, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh was appointed India's first Lokpal along with 8 other members. The appointment itself was made 5 years after the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act was passed in 2013 to investigate cases of corruption against certain categories of public servants. The Lokpal can inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been Prime Minister, or a Minister in the Union government, or a Member of Parliament, as well as officials of the Union government under Groups A, B, C and D. The body also covers complaints against chairpersons, members, officers and directors of any board or autonomous body either established by an Act of Parliament and any society or trust or body that receives foreign contribution above Rs 10 lakhs.

### **PRAAPTI portal**

According to the PRAAPTI portal, total outstanding dues of electricity distribution companies to power producers rose by 4.04 % year-on-year in May 2022.

PRAAPTI stands for – Payment Ratification and Analysis in Power Procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators. It is a platform aimed at enhancing transparency and encouraging best practices in Power Purchase transactions. PRAAPTI receives periodic updates/information from onboard Generation Companies (*GenCo*) regarding their Power sale invoicing and payment receipts from various. This information is then analyzed at portal's backend and the results are presented in form of industry standard parameters. The portal was launched in May 2018 to bring transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and DISCOMS.

### **Operation Dudhi**

The Paramilitary Assam Rifles has felicitated the surviving soldiers of Operation Dudhi, marked in the country's defence history as India's most successful counter-insurgency operation more than 30 years ago.

*Operation Dudhi:* A team of 15 soldiers of the Assam Rifles' 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion led by Naib Subedar Padam Bahadur

Chhetri had on May 5, 1991, gunned down 72 Pakistan-trained extremists and captured 13 others at 14,000 ft in Jammu & Kashmir.

### **What are Integrated Battle Groups?**

The Army has identified a holding formation on the Western front and a Strike formation on the Northern borders to be converted into agile Integrated Battle Groups (IBG).

Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) are brigade-sized, agile, self-sufficient combat formations, which can swiftly launch strikes against adversary in case of hostilities. Each IBG would be tailor-made based on Threat, Terrain and Task and resources will be allotted based on the 3 Ts. They need to be light so they will be low on logistics, and they will be able to mobilise within 12-48 hours based on the location.

### **Chief of Defence Staff**

The Government is reassessing the concept of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to fix overlaps in the system and streamline the process due to which there has been a delay in the appointment of a new CDS.

In December 2019, the government approved the creation of the post of CDS who would also function as the Principal Military Adviser to Defence Minister and Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC).

In addition, the DMA was created as the 5<sup>th</sup> department in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with the CDS functioning as its Secretary.

*Chief of Defence Staff:* He will be the single-point military adviser to the government as suggested by the Kargil Review Committee in 1999. He will be a Four-star General. CDS acts as the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee which will also have 3 service chiefs as members. His core function will be to foster greater operational synergy between the 3 service branches of the Indian military and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum.

### *Conditions*

- Not eligible to hold any Government office after demitting the office of CDS.
- No private employment without prior approval for a period of 5 years after demitting the office of CDS.

### **National Cyber Forensic Laboratory inaugurates in Hyderabad**

National Cyber Forensic Laboratory was inaugurated on the premises of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) in Hyderabad. The NCFL plans to expedite the resolution of cybercrime cases in the country.

### **Government granted funds to Intelligence Bureau for Multi Agency Centre**

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) has been granted funds by the Ministry of Home Affairs for a technology upgrade of the Multi Agency Centre (MAC).

*Multi Agency Centre* is a common counter-terrorism grid under the Intelligence Bureau that was made operational in 2001 following the Kargil War. As many as 28 organisations, including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Armed Forces and State Police, are part of the platform. Various security agencies share real-time intelligence inputs on the MAC.

### **Second edition of the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021 released**

The second edition of the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021 was released.



National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) was constituted in 2019 by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances. It is a biennial study that assesses States, Union Territories (UTs), and focuses on Central Ministries on the effectiveness of e-Governance service delivery.

NeSDA 2021 covers services across 7 sectors – Finance, Labour & Employment, Education, Local Governance & Utility Services, Social Welfare, Environment and Tourism sectors.

#### *Performance of various States*

- Among the North-East and Hill States, Meghalaya and Nagaland are the leading State Portals with an overall compliance of more than 90% across all assessment parameters.
- Among Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir ranked the highest with an overall compliance of nearly 90%.
- Among the Remaining States, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh had a compliance of more than 85%.
- Amongst all the States and UTs, Kerala had the highest overall compliance score.

## *7. International Relations*

### **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement**

The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the biggest bilateral trade pact between the 2 major economies, was activated on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022. The agreement was signed on February 18 between the 2 sides. As per the agreement, 90% of India's exports will have duty-free access to the Emirates. It covers goods, services and digital trade.

### **India elected as new Chair of Association of Asian Election Authorities**

India has been unanimously elected as the new Chair of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) for 2022-2024 at the meeting of the Executive Board and General Assembly in Manila, Philippines. The new member of the Executive Board now includes Russia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Taiwan, and the Philippines. The *Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA)* was established in 1998.

### **About Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**

The United States sees India's participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) as "very important". Therefore, Washington is designing the framework to prioritise "flexibility and inclusion".

*IPEF*: Announced in 2021, the IPEF aims to set regional standards for cooperation, and includes the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states. IPEF is created to encourage regional economies to "decouple" from the Chinese market by leading them to alternative supply chains.

### **India hosted SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure meeting**

India, Pakistan and other member-states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) have deliberated on boosting cooperation in combating various regional security challenges at a meeting hosted by New Delhi. The meeting took place under the framework of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).

India assumed Chairmanship of the Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of SCO (RATS SCO) in October 2021 for a period of 1 year.

### **India-France Navy conducts joint patrolling training in La Réunion**

The Navies of India and France have conducted their 2<sup>nd</sup> joint patrolling in the French island of La Réunion in the South-Western Indian Ocean. The objective is to demonstrate “joint surveillance and patrolling operations” capabilities.

#### *La Réunion*

- It is an island in the Indian Ocean that is an overseas department and region of France.
- It is located approximately 950 km east of the island of Madagascar and 175 km South-West of the island of Mauritius.
- Réunion is an outermost region of the European Union and is part of the Eurozone.
- Réunion and the fellow French overseas department of Mayotte are the only eurozone regions located in the Southern Hemisphere.

#### **World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022 held in Geneva, Switzerland**

World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022 was held at Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum represents the United Nations’ first and largest annual gathering of the Communication Technologies for development community. It was co-organized by International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line facilitators.

Theme for 2022: “*ICTs for Well-Being, Inclusion and Resilience: WSIS Cooperation for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs*”

#### **Indo-Bangla Naval Exercise – ‘Bongosagar’**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the India and Bangladesh Naval Exercise 'Bongosagar' was held at Port Mongla, Bangladesh. It aims to develop a high level of interoperability as well as joint operational skills through conducting various maritime operations and exercises between both navies.

#### **India US signed Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA)**

India and the US have signed the Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA). This agreement is expected to lead to enhanced investment support from America’s development finance institution in a wide range of sectors.

#### **Israel UAE signed Free Trade Agreement**

Israel and the United Arab Emirates have signed a Free Trade Agreement. This is the first of its kind that Israel has concluded with an Arab country. The deal scraps customs duties on 96% of all products traded. The UAE was the first Gulf country to normalise ties with Israel and only the third Arab nation to do so after Egypt and Jordan.

#### **India sent diplomatic delegation to Afghanistan led by Joint Secretary of MEA – JP Singh**

For the first time since the Taliban takeover, India has sent an official delegation to Afghanistan, led by J.P. Singh, joint secretary at Ministry of External Affairs. The objective is to discuss: resumption of stalled infrastructure projects, activation of diplomatic ties, and restarting the issue of visas for Afghan students and patients.

#### **India Sweden jointly hosted Industry Transition Dialogue in Stockholm**

India and Sweden have hosted the Industry Transition Dialogue in Stockholm, as a part of their joint initiative i.e., Leadership for Industry Transition (LeadIT).

The *Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)* gathers countries and companies that are committed to action to achieve the Paris Agreement.

### **UN accepts the Turkey's request to change its name to Türkiye**

The United Nations has agreed to a formal request for the name change from Turkey. Turkey will now be known as Türkiye. Domestically, citizens refer to the land as Türkiye, but its anglicised version 'Turkey' was adopted internationally.

### **BIMSTEC completes 25 years of its existence**

June 6 was marked the completion of 25 years since the 1997 Bangkok Declaration launched a modest grouping (of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), with the acronym, BIST-EC. 3 countries (Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar) joined it later to make it the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

### **Australia-India Water Security Initiative**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Government of Australia have signed an MoU for Technical Cooperation in urban water management.

*Australia-India Water Security Initiative:* AIWASI is a project under South Asia Water Security Initiative of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia. It aims to work towards the Water Sensitive City vision which is based on holistic management of the integrated water cycle.

### **New Global Initiative – Partners in the Blue Pacific**

The US and its allies – Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom – have launched a new initiative called 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' for "effective and efficient cooperation" with the region's small island nations.

### **India signed 2022 Resilient Democracies Statement along with G7 nations**

India has signed the '2022 Resilient Democracies Statement (RDS)' along with G7 countries. The statement calls for guarding the freedom, independence and diversity of civil society actors and protecting the freedom of expression and opinion online and offline. India will work towards equitable, inclusive and sustainable solutions to global challenges and reaffirm the rules-based International order.

### **Defence Exercise in News – RIMPAC**

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) is the largest naval exercise including four Quad countries (including India) and others in the Pacific rim. It is held biennially from June-July and is administered by US Navy's Indo-Pacific Command. It aims to train countries to ensure the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans.

## 8. Awards and Recognition

### **Prof Ajay K Sood appointed as the new Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)**

Prof Ajay K Sood from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has been appointed as the new Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India. He succeeds Prof K Vijayraghavan from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bengaluru.

The office of the PSA, established in 1999, aims to provide advice to the Prime Minister and cabinet on matters related to science, technology and innovation. It is currently a Secretary level position.

First PSA: *A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*

### **Rajiv Ranjan appointed as ex-officio member of MPC**

The Central Board of Directors of Reserve Bank of India has approved nomination of Rajiv Ranjan as an *ex-officio* member of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 was amended by Finance Act (India), 2016 to constitute MPC. It is tasked with framing monetary policy using tools like the repo rate, reverse repo rate, bank rate, Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR). It has been instituted by the Central Government of India under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act.

### **Cynthia Rosenzweig awarded World Food Prize**

Cynthia Rosenzweig, a NASA climate research scientist who has spent much of her career explaining how global food production must adapt to a changing climate, was awarded the World Food prize. She was awarded the \$250,000 prize in recognition of her innovative modelling of the impact of climate change on food production.

*World Food Prize*: It is the foremost international honour recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world.

### **4 Indian Photographers received Pulitzer Prize**

A team of 4 Indian Photographers from Reuters news agency – Danish Siddiqui, Adnan Abidi, Sanna Irshad Mattoo and Amit Dave – have won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography for their coverage of the COVID-19 crisis in India.

*Indians/Indian origins who have previously won the Pulitzer*

- Gobind Behari: the first from India to win the Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1937
- Jhumpa Lahiri
- Geeta Anand
- Siddhartha Mukherjee
- Sanghamitra Kalita

### **Himachal Pradesh becomes First ‘smoke free state’ in India**

Himachal Pradesh, in January 2022, became the first ‘smoke-free state’ in India. The major milestone was achieved while riding on the back of welfare schemes like ‘Ujjwala Yojana’ of Centre and ‘Himachal Grihini Suvidha scheme of the State Government’. It is also the 100 % LPG-enabled state in the country. It simply refers to the fact that 100% of households in Himachal have LPG connections in their houses.

### **Indian Architect Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi received Royal Gold Medal 2022**

Indian Architect Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi was bestowed with the prestigious Royal Gold Medal 2022.

Royal Gold Medal is one of the world's highest honours for architecture given by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), London, UK. The Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Queen Elizabeth II of the UK and the award is given to a person or group of people who have had a significant influence either directly or indirectly on the advancement of architecture.

### **First Indian President to visit Jamaica**

President of India has inaugurated a street named after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and a garden dedicated to India-Jamaica friendship during his visit to Jamaica. He has become the first Indian President to visit Jamaica. Jamaica is an island country situated in the Caribbean Sea.

President also paid visit to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

*Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:* It is an island country in the Caribbean. It is located in the South-East Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles, which lie in the West Indies at the southern end of the eastern border of the Caribbean Sea where the latter meets the Atlantic Ocean.

### **India selects as Country of honour at the Cannes Film Market, France**

India was the official 'Country of Honour' at the *Marche' Du Film*, which was organised alongside the 75<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cannes Film Festival, in France. This is the first time the Marche' du Film (Cannes Film Market) has an official Country of Honour and this tradition will continue annually with different nations in the spotlight at future editions. Also, it is happenstance that as India is celebrating its 75 years of Independence, Cannes Film Festival will also be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Note that, India's participation at this edition of Cannes Film Festival was the World Premier of the Movie "Rocketry" produced by renowned actor Shri. R. Madhavan.

Cannes Film Market is the business counterpart of the Cannes Film Festival and one of the largest film markets in the world. Established in 1959, it is held annually in conjunction with the Festival de Cannes.

### **Devasahayam Pillai becomes first Indian layman to be declared saint by Pope Francis**

Devasahayam Pillai, who embraced Christianity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has become the first Indian layman to be declared a saint by Pope Francis.

### **Palme d'Or awards announced**

Swedish director Ruben Ostlund's class warfare comedy *Triangle of Sadness* has won the Palme d'Or at the 75<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival. Cannes is one of the "big 5" international film festivals — the other four being the Venice Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and the Sundance Film Festival.

Best Actor: *Song Kang Ho (South Korea)*

Best Actress: *Zar Amir Ebrahimi (Iran)*

Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* is the only Indian film to win the award (The film was never released in India).

### **Tomb of Sand becomes first book written in Indian language to receive International Booker Prize**

"Tomb of Sand" has become the first book written in an Indian language to be awarded the International Booker Prize. The book was originally published in Hindi as *Ret Samadhi*. It is written by the author Geetanjali Shree and translated into English by Daisy Rockwell.

*International Booker Prize:* It is awarded annually for a single book, translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. This prize aims to encourage more reading of quality fiction from all over the world and has already had an impact on those statistics in the UK. The vital work of translators is celebrated, with the £50,000 prize money divided equally between the author and translator.

**Captain Abhilasha Barak becomes first woman to join the Army Aviation Corps**

Captain Abhilasha Barak has become the first woman to join the Army Aviation Corps as combat aviator after completion of a 6-month combat Army aviation course. The Army Aviation Corps, the youngest Corps of the Army, was formed on November 1, 1986.

**Vinai Kumar Saxena appoints as Lt. Governor of Delhi**

President of India has appointed Vinai Kumar Saxena as the new Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. He will replace Anil Baijal.

**Doordarshan wins ENBA Award 2021 for its pet show ‘Best Friends Forever’**

Doordarshan has won the best in-depth Hindi series award 2022 at the Exchange4media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) for a pet show called ‘Best Friends Forever’.

**‘All That Breathes’ won L’Oeil d’Or at Cannes 2022**

Delhi-based filmmaker Shaunak Sen’s documentary 'All That Breathes' has won the *L’Oeil D’Or* or ‘Golden Eye’ – the top documentary award at the Cannes Film Festival. It was India's sole entry at the Cannes Film Festival.

The film follows the lives of siblings Mohammad Saud and Nadeem Shehzad who, working out of their derelict basement in Wazirabad, a village in Delhi, rescue and treat injured birds, especially Black Kites.

**Martin Ennals Award awarded to Father Stan Swamy**

Martin Ennals Award was awarded posthumously to pay homage to Father Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist from Jharkhand who had been arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case. The award is given by the Martin Ennals Foundation, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is regarded as the Nobel Prize for human rights defenders.

Martin Ennals was a British activist who spent his life working to secure human rights across the world. He was Secretary-General of Amnesty International from 1968 to 1980.

**ASHA worker receives Global Health Leaders Award 2022 in WHA**

ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers have received the Global Health Leaders Award 2022 in the 75<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly. The other recipients include 8 volunteer polio workers who were shot and killed by armed gunmen in Takhar and Kunduz provinces in Afghanistan in February 2022.

ASHA workers are volunteers from within the community who are trained to provide information and aid people in accessing benefits of various healthcare schemes of the government. They act as a bridge connecting marginalized communities with facilities such as primary health centres, sub-centres and district hospitals. The role of these community health volunteers under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was first established in 2005.

## 9. Social Development

### **Delhi University marks its centenary**

Delhi University marks its centenary in May 2022. The University was established in 1922 by an Act of British India's legislature, the Central Legislative Assembly and is recognized as an Institute of Eminence (IoE) by the University Grants Commission. The Vice President of India serves as the University Chancellor.

### **20<sup>th</sup> edition of World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders**

20<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Press Freedom Index was published by Reporters Without Borders. It was released on the World Press Freedom Day celebrated every year on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. The Report points to an overall two-fold increase in media polarisation creating divisions within countries, and between countries at the international level.

#### *Press Freedom Index*

- Published every year since 2002 by Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
- Based in Paris, RSF is an independent NGO with consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).

#### *Ranking*

- India has fallen eight places from 142 to 150 in 2022 out of 180 countries.
- India's ranking, as per the report, fell on the back of increased "violence against journalists" and a "politically partisan media", which has landed press freedom in a state of "crisis" in the world's largest democracy.
- Norway (1<sup>st</sup>) Denmark (2<sup>nd</sup>), Sweden (3<sup>rd</sup>) Estonia (4<sup>th</sup>) and Finland (5<sup>th</sup>) grabbed the top positions.

#### *World Press Freedom Day*

The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. The day also marks the 1991 Windhoek Declaration (adopted by UNESCO). It is aimed towards the 'development of a free, independent and pluralistic press'.

### **Tomato flu cases detected in Kerala**

Tomato flu cases are being detected in Kerala. The flu gets its name because of the red blister it causes. Flu affects children below 5 years of age. Symptoms include rashes, skin irritation and dehydration. This flu is a self-limiting one and there is no specific drug for this. This means that the symptoms will resolve overtime on their own if supportive care is given.

### **India's Hypertension Control Initiative**

An analysis of data from the Health Ministry's India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) shows that 23% known hypertension patients registered with the programme had uncontrolled hypertension.

India Hypertension Control Initiative was launched in 2017 to achieve the target of 25% relative reduction in prevalence of raised blood pressure. The project aims to accelerate implementation of quality hypertension treatment for over 15 crore people. It was jointly launched by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO.

India has committed to a "25 by 25" goal, which aims to reduce premature mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025.

### **What is Endosulfan Pesticide?**

The Supreme Court has slammed the Kerala Government for State's inaction in providing relief to the Endosulfan pesticide exposure victims.

#### *Endosulfan*

- It is a widely banned pesticide with hazardous effects on human genetic and endocrine systems.
- The Supreme Court in India has banned the manufacture, sale, use, and export of Endosulfan throughout the country, citing its harmful health effects in 2011.
- It is sprayed on crops like cotton, cashew, fruits, tea, paddy, tobacco etc. for control of pests in agriculture such as whiteflies, aphids, beetles, worms etc.

### **Mozambique identified first case of Wild Poliovirus Type 1 since 1992**

Mozambique has identified its first case of Wild Poliovirus Type 1 after a child contracted the disease. It is the country's first such case since 1992 and the second imported case of wild poliovirus in Southern Africa this year. An outbreak was reported in Malawi earlier this year. As of today, wild poliovirus is endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **WHO releases first Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT)**

The World Health Organization and UNICEF have jointly released the first Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT).

*Assistive technology (AT)* is any item, piece of equipment, software programme, or product system that is used to help people with disabilities increase, maintain, or improve their functional abilities.

Examples: Prosthetics, braces, walkers, customised switches, special-purpose computers, screen readers, and specialist curricular software.

### **What are Shigella Germs?**

The food poisoning event in Kerala that claimed the life of a 16-year-old girl who ate chicken shawarma at a restaurant was caused by Shigella germs.

*Shigella* is a bacterial infection produced by the Enterobacter family of bacteria and is one of the most common causes of diarrhoea worldwide. Shigellosis is the infection it causes. Infection with Shigella causes diarrhoea (occasionally bloody), fever, and stomach cramps in the majority of patients. The disease is easily transmitted through direct or indirect contact with the patient's waste. Antibiotics should be provided to people who are sick or have underlying problems.

### **WHN declared Monkeypox as pandemic**

The World Health Network (WHN) has declared Monkeypox as a pandemic. The WHN said that the essential purpose of declaring a pandemic is to achieve a concerted effort across multiple countries or over the world to prevent widespread harm. WHN is an independent coalition of scientists formed to tackle the COVID-19 threat.

The Monkeypox virus is an orthopoxvirus, which is a genus of viruses that also includes the variola virus, which causes smallpox, and vaccinia virus, which was used in the smallpox vaccine. Monkeypox is a zoonosis, that is, a disease that is transmitted from infected animals to humans. Monkeypox virus infection has been detected in squirrels, Gambian poached rats, dormice, and some species of monkeys. Monkeypox causes symptoms similar to smallpox, although they are less severe. While vaccination eradicated smallpox worldwide in 1980, monkeypox continues to occur in a swathe of countries in Central and West Africa and has on occasion showed up elsewhere.



### **Latest National Achievement Survey released**

The outcomes of the latest National Achievement Survey (NAS) were released. The first edition of NAS was carried out in 2001. The objective of NAS is to provide a snapshot of learning outcomes in key subjects at the end of Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10. These classes are generally seen to mark important stages in the development of a child's cognitive abilities.

### **QS released its 19<sup>th</sup> edition of international university rankings**

Leading global higher education analysts QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) has released the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of one of the most-consulted international university rankings. It is the only international ranking to have received the approval of International Ranking Expert Group (IREG). This year's QS World University Rankings was the largest ever, with 1,418 institutions across 100 locations.

QS uses 6 indicators to compile the ranking: *Academic reputation (AR)*, *employer reputation (ER)*, *citations per faculty (CPF)*, *faculty/student ratio*, *international faculty ratio* and *international student ratio*.

The ranking was topped by the United States (US)'s Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) followed by the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom (UK) and Stanford University (US).

#### *Performance of Indian Institutions*

- The latest edition features 41 Indian universities, of which 12 improved their position and 7 are new entries.
- The IISc ranks 155<sup>th</sup> globally and is the global leader in the citations per faculty (CpF) indicator, which QS uses to evaluate the impact of the research produced by universities.
- IISc Bengaluru was also the fastest rising South Asian university.
- The IIT Bombay ranked at 172.
- OP Jindal Global University is the top-ranked private institute in India.

### **FSSAI releases 4<sup>th</sup> State Food Safety Index**

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)'s 4<sup>th</sup> State Food Safety Index was released on the occasion of World Food Safety Day (June 7). It seeks to measure the performance of States across five parameters of food safety. The index was developed by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) in 2018-19. Theme for World Food Safety Day 2022: *Safer Food, Better Health*

#### *Performance of various States*

- Tamil Nadu topped the State Food Safety Index followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Among smaller States, Goa stood first, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- Among UTs, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Chandigarh secured first, second and third ranks.

### **Thailand becomes first Asian country to decriminalize Marijuana**

Thailand has become the first country in Asia to decriminalize Marijuana which is also known as Cannabis. In 2018, Canada became the first G20 country to legalize the recreational use of cannabis. Uruguay legalized the recreational use of marijuana for all adults above the age of 18 in 2013.

### **EIU releases 2022 Global Liveability Index**

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released 2022's Global Liveability Index. The list was topped by Vienna, Austria. New Delhi has been ranked 112<sup>th</sup> in the list of most liveable cities while Mumbai is ranked at 117<sup>th</sup> position. The EIU, which is a sister organization to The Economist, ranked 173 cities around the world on a variety of factors, including health care, crime rates, political stability, infrastructure and access to green space.

### **First ever Performance Grading Index for districts released by MoE**

The first ever report on Performance Grading Index (PGI-D) for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 was released to grade schools in Indian districts. It was conducted by Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL under the Ministry of Education). It grades districts in 10 grades e.g., Daksh (> 90 points), Utkarsh (81-90%), etc.

#### *Highlights*

- State achievers: Chandigarh (Top), Gujarat, Kerala, Delhi
- District achiever: Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Jaipur (all in RJ)
- No 'Daksh' achiever district

## *10. Economy*

### **Bangladesh discovered new gas field at Koilastila Gas field**

Bangladesh has discovered a new gas field with the capacity to produce 20 million cubic feet of gas per day (MMCFD) at the Koilastila Gas field. Note that, the first gas field in Bangladesh was made in Sylhet in 1955.

### **What is Luna Cryptocurrency?**

The sudden drop in the value of Luna, which has rendered it nearly useless, has sent shockwaves through the cryptocurrency market, with experts comparing the crypto market disaster to the 2008 financial crisis.

Luna is the sister cryptocurrency of algorithmic stablecoin *Terra*. Stablecoins are tokens pegged to the value of a government-backed currency such as the US dollar or commodities like gold or silver. Tether (USDT) and USD Coin (USDC) are the 2 leading stablecoins.

### **NDB to open Regional Office in GIFT City Gujrat**

The New Development Bank (NDB) of the BRICS countries has announced plans to open its regional office of India at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) to cater to infrastructure and sustainable development needs of the country.

### **4<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Startup Advisory Council held in New Delhi**

4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Startup Advisory Council (NSAC) was held in New Delhi.

NSAC was constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Its role is to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.

Chairman: *Minister for Commerce & Industry*

### **State of Inequality in India Report released**

The State of Inequality in India Report was released. The Report has been written by the Institute for Competitiveness and presents a holistic analysis of the depth and nature of inequality in India. The report compiles information on inequities across sectors of health, education, household characteristics and the labour market.

The Report recommended that the government launch a guaranteed employment programme for the urban unemployed and roll out a Universal Basic Income (UBI) scheme to reduce income gaps, among other things.

### **Highest ever FDI Inflows in India**

According to the Government, the Foreign Direct Investment in the Financial Year 2021-22 has touched a "highest-ever" figure of \$83.57 billion. Among the top contributors to India's FDI inflow, Singapore topped the

charts with a share of 27% followed by the US (18%) and Mauritius accounting for 16%. The computer software and hardware remained the top sector which received the FDI inflow with around 25% share followed by services sector and automobile sector getting 12% each. Karnataka is the top recipient State with 38% share of the total FDI Equity inflow reported during the previous financial year followed by Maharashtra (26%) and Delhi (14%).

### **Top sugar producing States**

In 2021-22, Maharashtra has overtaken Uttar Pradesh (UP) to regain its position as India's top sugar producer. Also, India is the largest producer of sugar in the world but also consumes most of the sweetener it produces. Brazil, Thailand and India are the world's top sugar exporters.

### **WEF releases Travel and Tourism Development Index**

World Economic Forum has released the Travel and Tourism Development Index. This index is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index's direct evolution, having been published biennially for the last 15 years.

#### *Notable Points*

- India has been ranked at 54<sup>th</sup> place in the latest edition.
- In 2019, India had ranked at 46<sup>th</sup> position. India topped within the South Asia region.
- The top place has been grabbed by Japan.
- Japan is followed by the United States, Spain, France, and Germany respectively.

### **UNCTAD releases annual World Investment Report**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) has released the annual World Investment Report. As per it, India is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> despite a 30% decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. The United States remained the top recipient of FDI.

#### *Reports published by UNCTAD are*

- Trade and Development Report
- World Investment Report
- Technology and Innovation Report
- Digital Economy Report

### **Biotech Startup Expo – 2022 to mark 10 years of setting up of BIRAC**

To mark the completion of 10 years of setting up of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Biotech Startup Expo – 2022 was launched with the theme 'Biotech Startup Innovations: Towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat.'

BIRAC is a not-for-profit Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). The objective was to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

### **NHAI creates Guinness World Record for longest continuously laid bituminous lane**

State-owned NHAI has created a Guinness World Record for the longest continuously laid bituminous lane of 75 kilometres in 105 hours and 33 minutes on the national highway between Amravati and Akola districts in Maharashtra. This is an important corridor which connects major cities like Kolkata, Raipur, Nagpur and Surat.

### **Nepal West Seti Project**

India will be taking over an ambitious hydropower project in Nepal's West Seti.

*West Seti project:* The proposed 750-megawatt West Seti Hydropower Project is to be built on the Seti River in far-western Nepal. West Seti and Seti River, a joint project, has the capacity to generate 1200 MW of electricity.

### **RBI launches first global hackathon – HARBINGER 2021**

The Reserve Bank of India has launched its first global hackathon – “HARBINGER 2021 – Innovation for Transformation” with the theme ‘Smarter Digital Payments’ which was communicated.

### **Annual World Competitiveness Index 2022 released**

Annual World Competitiveness Index 2022 was released. As per it, India has seen the sharpest growth among the Asian economies, with a six-position jump from 43<sup>rd</sup> to 37<sup>th</sup> (among 63 nations). The list was topped by Denmark (replacing Switzerland).

#### *World Competitiveness Index 2022*

IMD business school in Switzerland and Singapore released the 2022 World Competitiveness Ranking. Its think-tank, IMD World Competitiveness Center, ranks 63 economies and assesses the extent to which a country promotes the prosperity of its people by measuring economic well-being via hard data and survey responses from executives.

### **Govt. procurement of Wheat set to dip 15-year low**

Wheat procurement by government agencies is set to dip to a 15-year low in the current marketing season, from an all-time high scale last year.

#### *Wheat*

- This is the second most important cereal crop in India after rice.
- Wheat is a rabi crop that requires a cool growing season and bright sunshine at the time of ripening.
- *Temperature:* Between 10-15°C (Sowing time) and 21-26°C (Ripening & Harvesting) with bright sunlight.
- *Rainfall:* Around 75-100 cm.
- *Soil Type:* Well-drained fertile loamy and clayey loamy (Ganga-Satluj plains and black soil region of the Deccan).

### **Uranium deposits found in Rajasthan**

Huge reserves of Uranium were found at Rohil (*Khandela Tehsil*) in Sikar district, which is over 120 km from the state capital Jaipur. After Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan is the 3<sup>rd</sup> State where uranium — which is considered one of the rare minerals in the world — has been found. The largest producers of uranium in the world are Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia. India imports uranium mostly from Kazakhstan and Canada.

## *11. Important Days*

### **World Bee Day**

World Bee Day is observed every year on 20<sup>th</sup> May annually. It was on this day in 1734 that Anton Janša, the pioneer of beekeeping, was born. The United Nations proclaimed May 20 as World Bee Day in 2017.

Theme for 2022: “*Bee Engaged: Celebrating the diversity of bees and beekeeping systems*”

#### *Efforts by the Government*

- The National Bee Board has created modules to impart training as part of the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM).
- The Government has launched ‘Honey Mission’ as part of ‘Sweet Revolution’.

- India is among the world's top 5 honey producers.









### Victory Day

Every year, Russia celebrates Victory Day on May 9 to commemorate the Soviet Union's victory over Germany's Nazi forces in World War II.

Victory Day marks the end of World War II and the victory of the Allied Forces in 1945. Adolf Hitler had shot himself on April 30. On May 7, German troops surrendered, which was formally accepted the next day, and came into effect on May 9.

Note that, in most European countries, it is celebrated on May 8, and is called the Victory in Europe Day. Russia does not celebrate Victory Day on the same date. This is because the instrument of surrender signed on May 7 stipulated that all hostilities would cease at 23:01 Berlin Time on May 8 and, as time in Moscow was an hour ahead, this would push the ceasefire into May 9.

## Major Countries Involved in World War II

Axis Powers	Allied Powers
Germany 	United States 
Italy 	France 
Japan 	Great Britain 
	Soviet Union 
	Canada 

### Mothers' Day celebration – Anna Jarvis

Anna Jarvis (May 1, 1864 – November 24, 1948) was an American activist who founded Mother's Day to honour her and "all mothers" in 1908. While the dates vary every year, it is largely celebrated on the second Sunday of the month of May every year. Because of her tireless efforts, most US states began honouring Mother's Day as a regional holiday by the year of 1911, and West Virginia, Jarvis' home state, was the first to do so in the year of 1910.

### 161<sup>st</sup> Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

The 161<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore was celebrated across the nation on May 7. He was born on 7 May 1861.

#### About

- He wrote the National Anthems of India and Bangladesh.
- In 1913, he became the first Indian to receive a Nobel Prize in Literature for his novel '*Geetanjali*'.
- He wrote the song *Banglar Mati Banglar Jol* (Soil of Bengal, Water of Bengal) to unite the Bengali population after Bengal partition in 1905.
- He also wrote the famed '*Amar Sonar Bangla*' which helped ignite a feeling of nationalism amongst people.

### **National Technology Day**

Since 1999, May 11 is celebrated as National Technology Day to mark India's technological advancements. Theme for the year 2022: *"Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future"*

On May 11, 1998, India detonated 3 nuclear bombs in the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam lead the Indian team of scientists to successfully test-fire the Shakti I nuclear missile at Rajasthan's Pokhran test range.

2 days later, the country successfully tested two more nuclear weapons as a part of the same Pokhran-II/Operation Shakti initiative. After these tests, the then Prime Minister Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared India a nuclear state, making it the 6<sup>th</sup> country to join the 'nuclear club' of nations.

Hansa 3, India's first indigenous aircraft was also first tested on the same day in Bangalore. Successful test firing of Trishul, a short-range missile made in India, was also done on the same day.

#### *Technology Development Board India*

On the occasion of National Technology day, TDB hosts scientific technology-based webinars and felicitate individuals for excellent works in the field of Science and Technology every year. Established in 1996, TDB is a statutory body that works under the Department of Science and Technology, GoI. It also provides financial assistance for concerns of Indian industries and other agencies for commercialization of indigenized technologies or adoption of imported technologies for wider domestic applications.

India is currently among 9 countries in the world that have a publicly known nuclear weapons. In 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test, codenamed '*Smiling Buddha*', at Pokhran in Rajasthan.

Also note that, SSR and SRIMAN Guidelines were released on the occasion of Technology Day.

*Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)* is vital for strengthening science and society linkages for making S&T ecosystem responsive to societal needs. The guidelines primarily involve bridging science-society, science-science and society-science gaps, thereby bringing trust, partnership and responsibility of science at an accelerated pace towards achieving social goals.

*Scientific Research Infrastructure Sharing Maintenance and Networks (SRIMAN) Guidelines* aims to promote efficient utilisation and wider access of Research Infrastructure to scientists, researchers and industry professionals across the country.

### **Sikkim Statehood Day**

The Statehood Day of Sikkim was observed on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022. It was on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975 that Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of the Union of India.

#### *Background*

Beginning with Phuntsog Namgyal, the first chogyal (*monarch*), the Namgyal dynasty ruled Sikkim until 1975. In 1950, 3 years after India's independence, a treaty was signed between Sikkim and the Republic of India. Under the agreement, the former continued its status as a 'protectorate' State within the Union of India. In September 1974, the Chogyals called for a referendum. In the subsequent referendum, majority participants voted in favour of joining India. Therefore, on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1975, then-President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, signed a constitutional amendment, and, a day later, Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> State of India; the position of the Chogyal was abolished as well.

### **International Museum Day 2022**

International Museum Day is observed every year on 18<sup>th</sup> May. The Day was instituted in 1977 by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Theme for the year 2022: *“The Power of Museums”*

ICOM is a membership association and a non-governmental organisation which establishes professional and ethical standards for museum activities. It is the only global organisation in the museum field. It was created in 1946 and is headquartered in Paris, France.

#### *Constitutional Provisions*

*Article 49:* Protect monuments, places and objects of artistic or historic interest which are declared to be of national importance.

### **World Metrology Day 2022**

World Metrology Day is celebrated annually on 20<sup>th</sup> May globally. The day is observed on the anniversary of signing the famous Metre Convention in the year 1875 in Paris. The Day is organised jointly by The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and *Bureau International des Poids et Mesures* (BIPM).

Theme for 2022: *“Metrology in the Digital Era”*

#### *Metre Convention*

- It was signed in Paris on 20 May 1875 by representatives of 17 nations.
- The treaty created the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), an intergovernmental organization under the authority of the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM) and the supervision of the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM).
- The Convention was signed in Paris on 20 May 1875 by representatives of 17 nations.
- It aims to set the framework for collaboration in science and measurements globally.
- Metrology is called the scientific study of measurement.

### **International Day of UN Peacekeepers**

International Day of UN Peacekeepers is observed every year on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

Theme for 2022: *“People. Peace. Progress. The Power of Partnerships”*

United Nations Peacekeeping is a joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support. Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council. It is often referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets because of their light blue berets or helmets.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by 3 basic principles:

1. Consent of the parties
2. Impartiality
3. Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on 1948, May 29 when the Security Council deployed a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) with the objective to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

### **World Migratory Bird Day**

The World Migratory Bird Day is observed every year on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

It is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It has a global outreach and is an effective tool to help raise global awareness of the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

Theme for the year 2022: *'Light Pollution'*

### **Labour Day**

The Labour Day was observed across the world on May 1, 2022.

The day is also known as International Worker's Day and May Day. In India, the first celebration of the Labour Day was organised in Madras (now Chennai) by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan on May 1, 1923.

The date was chosen due to events on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1884, the American Federation of Organized Trades and Labour Unions demanded an 8-hour workday, to come in effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1886. This resulted in the general strike and the Haymarket (in Chicago) Riot of 1886, but eventually also in the official sanction of the 8-hour workday.

The date was then chosen for International Workers' Day by the Second International, a pan-national organisation (USA) of socialist and communist political parties, to commemorate the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago in 1886. 3 years later, a French socialist party, created an international day to honour the labour movement and marked May 1 in commemoration of the Haymarket Massacre.

### **International Day for Biological Diversity**

International Day for Biological Diversity is observed on 22<sup>nd</sup> May every year to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

The Resolution to celebrate the day was adopted in 1992. The day was initially celebrated on December 29 till year 2000 starting from 1993. It was marked on December 29 to celebrate the day the Convention on Biological Diversity came into effect. It was later shifted to May 22 to commemorate the adoption of convention at Rio Earth Summit.

Theme for the year 2022: *"Building a shared future for all life"*

### **International Nurse Day**

International Nurse Day is observed globally on 12<sup>th</sup> May every year.

This day is observed to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Florence Nightingale. She was also known as *'Lady with the Lamp'*. She was the founder of modern nursing and was a British Social Reformer and Statistician.

Theme for the year 2022 – *"Nurses: "A Voice to Lead - Invest in Nursing and respect rights to secure global health"*

### **World No Tobacco Day**

World Health Organization celebrates World No Tobacco Day every year on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

The day is being celebrated to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic including the preventable death and disease it causes. This yearly celebration aims to raise awareness amid the global citizens about not only the dangers of using tobacco but also the business practices of tobacco companies.

Theme for the year 2022: *"Tobacco: Threat to our environment"*



### **World Red Cross Day**

World Red Cross Day was observed globally on 8<sup>th</sup> May every year.

The day aims to broaden the public's understanding of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Red Crescent Societies are affiliated and work in cooperation with the World Red Cross to assist in the activities of the movement. National Red Crescent societies and Red Cross Societies are found in almost every nation worldwide.

### **National Dengue Day**

National Dengue Day was observed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May every year in India.

National Dengue day was an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to make people aware of dengue and its prevention measures. It also has the people to know how to prepare and control dengue before the transmission season begins.

### **World Milk Day**

June 1 is observed as World Milk Day every year.

The aim is to achieve 'Dairy Net Zero' by reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years and improving waste management in order to make the dairy sector sustainable. It was established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 2001 to recognize the importance of milk as a global food. India is the world's largest milk producer.

The top 5 milk-producing states are: *Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.*

The theme of World Milk Day 2022 is to bring attention to the climate change crisis and how the dairy sector can reduce its impact on the planet.

### **World Accreditation Day**

World Accreditation Day is celebrated on 9<sup>th</sup> June every year.

WAD has been established by the joint efforts of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

Theme for the year 2022: *"Accreditation: Sustainability in Economic Growth and the Environment"*

### **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 2022**

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking day is observed every year on 26<sup>th</sup> June.

The date 'June 26' is to commemorate Lin Zexu's (Chinese Head of State under Emperor of the Qing dynasty) dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, ending in June 25, 1839, just before the First Opium War in China.

Theme for the year 2022: *"Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises"*

The *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)* is a United Nations Office that was established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office at Vienna. It is Headquartered at Vienna, Austria.

### **Statistics Day**

Statistics Day is celebrated on 29<sup>th</sup> June every year.

The day is observed in recognition of the notable contributions made by Late Professor 'Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis' in the fields of Statistics, Statistical system and Economic planning. The theme of National Statistics Day 2022 is 'Data for Sustainable Development'.

*PC Mahalanobis (1893–1972):* He is referred to as the Chief Architect of Indian Statistical System as well as Father of Statistical Science in India. He established the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in 1931 in Kolkata. In 1959, it was made an autonomous body of Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. He also helped in the establishment of Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI). He introduced 3 key concepts to the theory and practice of Sample Surveys which are: Pilot surveys, Optimum survey design and Inter Penetrating Network of Sub-Samples technique (IPNS). The Mahalanobis Model was employed in the Second Five Year Plan, which worked towards the rapid industrialization of India.

### **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought**

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2022 is observed every year on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

This day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution in 1995, after the day when United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was drafted.

Theme for the year 2022: “*Rising up from drought together*”

*Desertification* is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts. It occurs because of dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

*United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):* It was established in 1994. It is the sole legally binding international agreement, linking environment and development to sustainable land management. It is the only Convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference's Agenda 21 (1992). Its 197 Parties aim, through partnerships, to implement the Convention and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The end goal is to protect land from over-use and drought, so it can continue to provide food, water and energy. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry in India for this Convention.

### **World Environment Day**

World Environment Day is observed every year on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Day was chosen to mark the first day of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16 in 1972. This year's host was Colombia in partnership with Germany. The theme for 2022 was ‘*Only One Earth*’ focuses on our role as the citizens of the Earth, to protect the environment and to encourage sustainable living everywhere and every day. The World Environment Day is an initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Also, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockholm conference was being observed this year.

#### *Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement*

- It was launched by India on the occasion of World Environment Day (5th June).
- The idea of LiFE was introduced by the Indian Prime Minister during the 26th United Nations Climate

Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021.

- The idea promotes an environment-conscious lifestyle that focuses on ‘mindful and deliberate utilisation’ instead of ‘mindless and destructive consumption’.
- The Movement aims to utilise the power of collective action and nudge individuals across the world to undertake simple climate-friendly actions in their daily lives. The Mission plans to create and nurture a global network of individuals, namely ‘Pro-Planet People’ (P3).

### **World Day against Child Labour**

World Day against Child Labour is observed every year on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

It is intended to foster the worldwide movement against Child Labour in any of its forms. It was launched in 2002 to raise awareness and prevent Child Labour by the International Labour Organisation. UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7, set by the international community, calls for an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025.

Theme for the year 2022: “*Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour*”

### **International Yoga Day**

International Yoga Day is observed on June 21<sup>st</sup> every year.

The World Health Organization mentions *yoga* as a means to improve health in its Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030: More active people for a healthier World. The UN proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga by passing a resolution on December 11, 2014, during the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly had declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga in 2014 at the initiative of India with the support of 177 countries. Theme for the year 2022: ‘*Yoga for Humanity*’. *Yoga* is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word ‘yoga’ derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.

On the occasion of International Yoga Day, the AYUSH Ministry has announced to give the ‘Prime Minister’s Award for Outstanding Contribution towards the Development and Promotion of Yoga’ for 2022 to 2 individuals and 2 organisations in recognition of their contributions in the space.

2 individuals Bhikkhu Sanghasena from Ladakh, Marcus Vinicius Rojo Rodrigues from Brazil and 2 organisations, “The Divine Life Society” from Uttarakhand and the British Wheel of Yoga from United Kingdom have been chosen for award. They will also receive Rs 25 lakh as cash prize, a trophy and a certificate.

### **World Bicycle Day**

World Bicycle Day is observed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June every year. The day is marked to spread awareness about the benefits of using a bicycle. As per the United Nations, the day highlights the uniqueness, longevity and versatility of the bicycle. The day has been observed since 2018 after a resolution was passed by the United Nations, during its 72<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

### **Canada Province to celebrate Turban Day on April 13**

Manitoba in Canada has enacted the Turban Day Act. As per this Act, April 13 every year will now be celebrated as Turban Day across the Province. Manitoba felt it was necessary to have a day that officially recognises the turban as a part of Canada’s diversity and multiculturalism.

The day of Baisakhi or Vaisakhi, which usually falls on April 13 or 14 each year, commemorates the birth of Khalsa Panth. It was on this day in 1699 that the tenth Guru Gobind Singh had laid the foundation of Khalsa Panth at Anandpur Sahib among his followers.

## 12. Culture

### **Rakhigari site of Harappan civilization**

DNA samples collected from 2 human skeletons unearthed at Rakhigarhi have been sent for scientific examination. The outcome might tell about the ancestry and food habits of people who lived in the Rakhigarhi region thousands of years ago.

Rakhigarhi, in Haryana, became an archaeological hotspot when Amarendra Nath, former director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), undertook excavations at the site in 1997. It is a 5,000-year-old site that showcases continuity from the Harappan age to the present times. The village also has havelis that are a couple of hundred years old. The site is located in the Sarasvati river plain, some 27 km from the seasonal Ghaggar river. The Rakhigarhi site is one of the “5 iconic sites” declared by the Central Government in the Union budget 2020-21.

### **8<sup>th</sup> century Martand Temple**

A controversy has erupted over a puja ceremony attended by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the premises of the Archaeological Survey of India – protected Martand Sun temple in Anantnag, with the ASI claiming that it was in violation of Ancient Monument Protection Act (ASI) Rules.

#### *Temple*

The 8<sup>th</sup>-century Martand Temple is one of the oldest sun temples in India and a symbol of invaluable ancient spiritual heritage. Built by Lalitaditya Muktapida, the Martand Sun Temple is said to have been an excellent specimen of Kashmiri architecture and one of the holiest shrines for the Kashmiri Pandits. The temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD and the ruins are now marked as a “site of national importance” by the Archaeological Survey of India.

### **11<sup>th</sup> century Monument – Bhojshala**

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has issued notices to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Central Government and the State Government on a petition pertaining to the dispute over the monument of Bhojshala in state’s Dhar district.

Bhojshala is an ASI protected 11<sup>th</sup> century monument, which Hindus claim is a temple of Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), while the Muslim community treats it as Kamal Maula Mosque. The name is derived from the celebrated king Bhoja of the *Paramāra* dynasty of Central India, a patron of education and the arts, to whom major Sanskrit works on poetics, yoga and architecture are attributed. As per the arrangement made by the ASI in 2003, Hindus perform puja in the premises every Tuesday, while Muslims offer namaz in the complex on Fridays.

### **Buddha Purnima**

Buddha Purnima was celebrated on May 16<sup>th</sup> to mark the birth anniversary of Siddhartha Gautama or Gautam Buddha. It is also believed to be the day he attained salvation or Nirvana under the Mahabodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. It is also known as *Vesak*. In 1999, it became an UN-designated day, to acknowledge the contribution of Buddhism to society.

Gautam attained Bodhi (enlightenment) under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya, Bihar. Buddha gave his first sermon in the village of Sarnath, near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as Dharma Chakra Pravartana (turning of the wheel of law). He died at the age of 80 in 483 BCE at Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. The event is known as *Mahaparinibban* or Mahaparinirvana.

Schools of Buddhism: Mahayana (Idol Worship), Hinayana, Theravada, Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism), Zen.

On the occasion of Buddha Jayanti on May 16, Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi (first-ever to visit) and his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba laid the foundation stone for the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage in Lumbini, Nepal.

#### *Lumbini*

- Lumbini is located in Rupandehi district of Nepal's Lumbini province.
- It is believed to be the birthplace of the Shakya prince Siddhartha Gautam.
- It is described in Buddhist literature as a Pradimoksha-vana (*sin-free forest*).
- It was built by Anjana, king of the Koliya clan, for his queen Rupadevi or Rummindei.

#### **Gyanvapi Masjid of Varanasi, UP**

An appeal against the video survey of Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque was heard by the Supreme Court. The survey, according to a Muslim organisation, is in violation of the Places of Worship Act, 1991. The Act states that a place of worship's religious nature must remain the same as it was on August 15, 1947. It says no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section.

The Gyanvapi Masjid is located near the iconic Kashi Vishwanath temple in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi.

#### **Kanheri caves in outskirts of Mumbai**

Various amenities were inaugurated at ancient Kanheri Caves on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Kanheri caves are located in the forests of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, on the former island of Salsette in the western outskirts of Mumbai. It has around 100 caves. They cover the period from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. They belong to the Hinayana phase of Buddhist architecture. However, additions were made when Mahayana Buddhism was gaining ground, for instance, 5<sup>th</sup> century image of Buddha.

Kanheri was mentioned in the travelogues of foreign travellers. The earliest reference of Kanheri is ascribed to Fa-Hein, a Chinese traveller, who visited India during 399-411 CE.

#### **India participates in First International Migration Review Forum**

India has taken part in the First International Migration Review Forum, held under the auspices of the General Assembly at the United Nations in New York, USA.

The International Migration Review Forum will serve as the primary inter-governmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects pertaining to migration and its intersection with the Sustainable Development Goals. It will consist of four interactive multi-stakeholders round tables, a policy dialogue and a plenary. It will result in adoption of a Progress Declaration.

#### **Puri Heritage Corridor**

According to Archaeological Survey of India, the Odisha State Government was constructing the Puri Heritage Corridor project without proper licence in protected and controlled areas of the monument. A PIL has been filed in the Court against the proposal, which has prompted worries about its influence on the structural safety of the Puri temple.

*Puri Heritage Corridor Project:* Conceived in 2016, the Project aims to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage. The project includes redevelopment of Puri lake and Musa river revival plan.

### *Puri Jagannath Temple*

- It is an important Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Jagannath, a form of Sri Krishna in Puri in Odisha.
- The temple is believed to have been constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by King Anatarvarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called ‘Yamanika Tirtha’ where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of ‘Yama’, the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- The Puri temple is famous for its annual Ratha Yatra, or chariot festival, in which the 3 principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars.

### **250<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy celebrated**

The 250<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy was celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022.

*Raja Ram Mohan Roy:* He is popularly remembered as the father of Indian renaissance. He was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1772 in Radhanagar (Bengal Presidency). He represented Akbar Shah II (19<sup>th</sup> Mughal Emperor) in England where he pleaded for his pension and allowances. Akbar II awarded him the title ‘Raja’.

### *Social Contributions*

- He stood against the practice of the Abolition of Satis Act, 1829, which was a result of R.R Mohan Roy’s efforts.
- He pleaded for the right of inheritance and property for women.
- He fought against polygamy and child marriage which were prevalent back then.
- He supported women education as he believed that only education would fetch women equal social status with men.

### *Organisations he is associated with:*

- Started Atmiya Sabha in 1814 in order to crusade against idol worship, meaningless rituals and superstitious beliefs. He spreaded the monotheistic ideals.
- In 1817, along with David Hare, he founded the Hindu College at Calcutta.
- The Calcutta Unitarian Committee, jointly founded by William Adam and Rammohun Roy in September 1821, sought to bring together prominent Brahmins who were friends of Roy’s and supporters of his agenda for the promotion of religious monotheism and social reform.
- He created the ‘Brahma Sabha’ in 1828 (*set up with Debendranath Tagore*).
- In 1822, he set up the Anglo-Hindu school which taught mechanics and Voltaire’s philosophy.
- In 1825, he started the Vedanta college where Indian learning, as well as the Western social and physical sciences, were taught.
- In 1830, he assisted Alexander Duff to set up the General Assembly’s Institution, which later became the Scottish Church College.

*Literary Contributions:* Brahmanical Magazine (1821), Sambad Kaumudi, [a Bengali weekly, started in 1822], Mirat-ul-Akbar, [a Persian journal], Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (1804), Vedanta Gantha (1815), Translation of an abridgement of the Vedanta Sara (1816), Kenopanishads (1816), Ishopanishad (1816), Kathopanishad (1817).

### **India gives gifts to the Quad leaders carrying cultural art forms**

At the Quad Summit held at Tokyo, India has given gifts to the leaders of the US, Australia and Japan showcasing India’s rich cultural heritage and art forms.

*Gifts are listed below.*

- Sanjhi Art form – US President
- Gond art painting – Australian Prime Minister
- Rogan painting – Japanese Prime Minister

**Government inaugurated India's first 'Lavender Festival' in Bhaderwah, Jammu**

Government of India has inaugurated India's first 'Lavender Festival' in Bhaderwah (Doda district of Jammu).

Lavender is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, Lamiaceae. Lavender has been used over centuries in traditional medicine and cosmetics. India's first National Institute of High Altitude Medicine is also being built in Bhaderwah. Bhaderwah has been described as the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution.

**Bharat Gaurav express train**

The Indian Railways' Southern Railway zone has begun the maiden service of privately-run 'Bharat Gaurav Trains' from Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu to Shirdi in Maharashtra.

Indian Railways had launched the operation of theme-based Bharat Gaurav train in the month of November 2021 in a bid to connect historical places. The objective is to showcase India's cultural heritage and magnificent historical places to people of the country and world through these trains.